

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 7-10 and 17-20 are withdrawn. Claims 1-5 and 11-15 are amended. Claims 1 and 11 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 6 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and that claims 3-5 and 13-15 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's early indication of allowable subject matter. As indicated below, rather than rewriting any of objected to claims 3-6 and 13-15 in independent form at this time, instead, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 11, and 12 has been overcome by showing that the Bunya et al. reference is disqualified under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) as prior art in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Drawings

The Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Clarification is respectfully requested in the next official communications.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 7-10 and 17-20 and has made the Restriction Requirement final. Claims 7-10 and 17-20 remain pending. Independent claims 1 and 11 are believed to be generic. Assuming independent claims 1 and 11 are found to be allowable, all claims depending therefrom should also be in condition for allowance.

Claim Objections

In response to the objection to claims 1 and 11, these claims have been amended to remove the redundant wording pointed out by the Examiner.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 2-5 and 12-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set forth certain instances wherein the claim language is not clearly understood.

In order to overcome this rejection, Applicants have amended claims 2-5 and 12-15 to correct each of the deficiencies specifically pointed out by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim

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the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-2 and 11-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bunya et al. (U.S. 6,752,711) in view of Sheikh-Bahaie (U.S. 6,805,000).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

To overcome this rejection, and in accordance with the provisions set forth in MPEP § 706.02(l)(1) and 706.02(l)(2), the Applicants respectfully submit that

“Application 10/774,446 and U.S. Patent No. U.S. 6,725, 711 to Bunya et al., were at the time of the invention of Application No. 10/774,446 was made, were owned by HONDA MOTOR CO., LTD.”

Therefore, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 11, and 12 has been overcome by showing that the Bunya et al. reference is disqualified under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) as prior art in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Further, as discussed above, independent claims 1 and 11 are believed to be generic.

Accordingly, dependent claims 2-10 and 12-20 are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 of the present application are in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

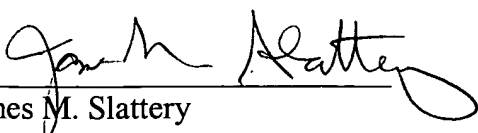
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030 (Direct Line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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